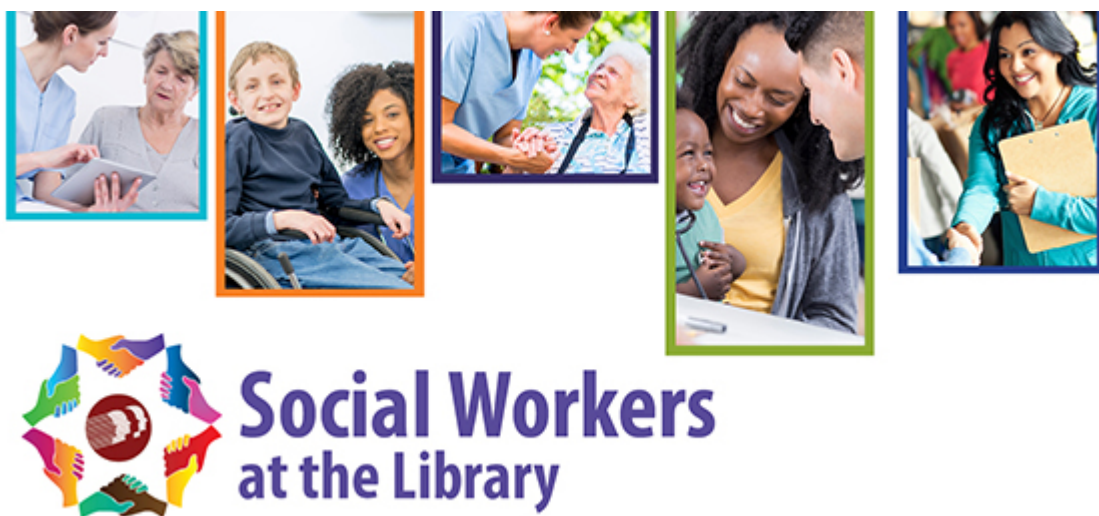


Pilot Program Will Connect Library Patrons to State Services

Delaware state social workers have begun providing assistance at libraries in all three counties under a pilot program launched by the [Delaware Division of Libraries](#) and the [Department of Health and Social Services](#).

Two social workers from the [Division of Social Services' Community Partner Support Unit](#) are now available once per week for three hours at seven libraries across the state.

Social workers can guide patrons through the state's online benefits application process, assist individuals in applying for food benefits, help applicants gather necessary documents, connect eligible families and individuals with employment and training resources, and connect with other DHSS agencies to answer questions as needed. This onsite assistance is in addition to the help available at the 15 State Service Centers located statewide.



Public libraries are an ideal setting for the delivery of social services. As centers for community engagement and

access to technology, people in need of assistance in many cases are already library patrons.

“This partnership enables libraries to leverage DHSS expertise in assisting library patrons with meeting their needs,” said **Deputy Secretary of State Dr. Courtney Stewart**. “Our libraries have evolved into force-multipliers for community outreach, and adding social services to the compliment of resources available through our libraries is a perfect fit.”

“Every day, in all Delaware public libraries, people come through the doors seeking assistance on a variety of topics, including social services,” said **State Librarian Dr. Annie Norman**. “This pilot project reflects the reality that critical needs have become more pronounced.”

“Connecting people to services as easily and efficiently as possible is what we aim to do every day, and this program is a great example of that,” said **Ray Fitzgerald, director of DHSS’ Division of Social Services**. “Library patrons will receive face-to-face contact with a social worker who can help them on the spot and, as needed, connect them to other beneficial services and programs. We hope this will ease the process for those seeking services while freeing library staff to concentrate on patrons’ other needs.”

Currently, more than 150 agencies and nonprofits are collaborating with Delaware libraries to provide services to patrons across the state.

“Through Delaware Partners, our goal is to extend the reach and effectiveness of partner capabilities and resources and foster collaboration,” said Dr. Norman, “We’re delighted to add the specialized expertise of DHSS social workers in our libraries.”

The schedule for social workers in Delaware libraries is as follows:

- [North Wilmington Public Library](#), 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Fridays
- [Wilmington Public Library – Rodney Square](#), 9:30 a.m. to
12:30 p.m. Wednesdays
- [Route 9 Library](#), New Castle, 1 to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays
- [Dover Public Library](#), 9 a.m. to noon Wednesdays
- [Seaford Public Library](#), 1:30 to 4:30 p.m. Mondays
- [Selbyville Public Library](#), 10 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Thursdays
- [Frankford Public Library](#), 1:30 to 3:30 p.m. Thursdays